

**From:** [Sandoval, Joni](#)  
**To:** [Myers, Craig](#); [Dhieux, Joyel](#); [Romero, David](#); [christopher.j.taylor@uscg.mil](mailto:christopher.j.taylor@uscg.mil)  
**Cc:** [R8 Documentation Unit Leader](#)  
**Subject:** Durango Assessment of Irrigation Ditch Locations  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 6:40:15 PM  
**Attachments:** [Durango Division 7 ditch assesment 1.docx](#)  
[image001.png](#)

---

Here's a recommendation I discussed with Water Board member, Ed Zink, and Taylor and I concur if Unified Command is in support of this. Mr. Zink, the board member is available to meet and discuss this week. Photographs have also been uploaded to OSC.net in the operational viewer.

Assessments will continue tomorrow with OSC Romero and PO Taylor, and I can also be available to meet and go over hard copy maps we have borrowed from Mr. Zink. Thanks.

Joni Sandoval

Federal On-Scene Coordinator

U.S. EPA, Region VIII

Emergency Response Program (EPR-ER)

1595 Wynkoop St.

Denver, CO 80202

303-312-6988 (Desk)

303-241-1356 (Cell)



## Notes from Durango/Division 7 Irrigation Ditches

On August 11, 2015 there was a tour with: Ed Zink (wife Patti), Animas River Wetlands, LLC., [edzink@animasriverwetlands.com](mailto:edzink@animasriverwetlands.com), Joni Sandoval, EPA On-Scene Coordinator, and Petty Officer Christopher Taylor, USCG

On the north end of division 7, where the Animas River drains into the irrigation ditch, flow is about 80 CFS. About 8 miles south of that point, near the Zink property, flow is about 20 CFS, and there are 4 more miles of ditches in district 7 for a total of about 12-13 miles. There is a syphon at the location where the Hermosa Creek meets the Irrigation drainage from the Animas River, and the Hermosa drops back into the Animas a few miles downstream. The Hermosa creek runs red at times, and right now has a layer of orange sediment, because the head gate doesn't shut all the way due to age. In other areas, the water feeding into the hot springs normally runs orange. This water tends to run along the fault lines. There are 300 members who own rights to the ditch, and a board of 5 elected members including Ed Zink.

From the visual assessment of approximately 4-5 ditch locations, where the head gates were left open and the water was stagnant, there was a staining of orange about the thickness of a coat of paint. It was generally sticking to the rocks and sediment of the banks, and was easily wiped off upon touch. Where the water flow was increased, we saw very little staining indicating flushing would be favorable to clear up some of the orange material left behind. Mr. Zink and the water board has discussed the staining and has a preference to flush the ditches while leaving the head gates closed, and pushing the flush down Hermosa creek, which will join back into the Animas river. They believe that this will prevent contamination where there is either very little or none at all from going onto other ditch owner's land. The board member mentioned the orange water has been dispersing from the mine for centuries based on sediment deposits, and they've had no visible effects on any human or animal populations. Mr. Zink is willing to speak to stakeholders about the board recommendation as well as information about the ditches.

Have not evaluated the Reed ditch yet, and that evaluation will likely take place tomorrow, 08/12/15.

See next page for Division 7 map. Assessment was of the Durango area.

Division 7 Map below:



